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The LOFT  
ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE  
Rockford, Illinois







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## The LOFT

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Volume 1, Number 1

January, 1968

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Rock Valley College

Rockford, Illinois

Student publication of Prose, Poetry, and Art.

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## PROLOGUE

*I have wasted time  
And purchased a dream or two.  
My fantasy is really mine;  
It does nothing to subdue.*

Marian Lackey, Poetry Editor

The need for student self-expression, the answer to "What's happening?" and the chance to move in a forward direction prompted the establishment of The LOFT magazine as an RVC campus venture. The student created and student selected material printed herein represents but a small portion of the response to the creative challenge put forth earlier this semester.

A variety of moods presented in the material reflect the overall serious thoughts of the student body. Realizing the uncertainties of their future and life, most selections present a serious tone yet contain a refreshingly youthful philosophy, and, some, a light satire.

Like the pioneers who established this farm to secure a livelihood and a foothold in the settlement of the area, these students have opened the gates toward their betterment of mankind, their establishment of their ideals and culture.

Similar to Lincoln's time, in his youthful days when he studied by firelight in the family's log cabin, the conversion of the farm buildings—the barn, its loft, and other buildings into the "instant campus" as now exists—"makes do" with simplicity; and the students carry through with fledgling enthusiasm and determination to acquire knowledge and skill.

So it is symbolic and appropriate that "The LOFT" was selected to name this publication; for in the loft centers much of the student activity—the Student Commission, the Valley Forge publications, traffic control, student counseling, and other student-related offices.

The LOFT magazine, published once a semester, is student organized, planned, and edited to present the prose, poetry, and art works of students only, in all fields of college study and endeavor.

While the policy and aim as standards are toward the best quality and good taste in the material selected for publication, we are much aware that perfection is impossible to attain. May each succeeding staff be successful in striving to improve upon their edition's contents.

The LOFT magazine is intended to provide the opportunity to display the creative efforts in science, nursing, vocational, technical, business, literature, and art works from college students at RVC. As it is an outlet to display student accomplishments, it also welcomes students' comment, opinion, and even dissent aimed toward eventual betterment.

Most heartfelt thanks to all the students who willingly submitted their creative work for consideration, and to the faculty advisors and the entire staff for their most encouraging and generous aid to help The LOFT magazine become a reality.

Elsie V. Alfrey  
Editor-in-chief

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## THE EXECUTION OF ALFRED COUNTRYMAN

*An account of Winnebago County's first hanging*

The steam spewed out from the sides of the engine, dancing along the ground until it began to rise and disappear into the early morning air. While overhead, the early dawn was darkened even more by the billowing smoke that rose from the eastbound special in from Dubuque, Iowa. Another train would arrive in just a few hours, carrying another load of persons eager to watch the impending scene that was just now beginning to unfold. Rockford's State Street was overflowing with horse drawn teams, bunched and crowded, until they were spilling over into the side streets. The local saloons were open early that gusty March 31, 1857, and business was brisk. All sorts of notable people were seen hurrying about. Among the notable were newspaper reporters from all over the midwest, including the Chicago Tribune. Today—Rockford, Illinois would hang its first man.

The courthouse was a beehive of activity this morning, and on occasion one could catch glimpses of the new sheriff, Sam Church, and once in awhile Alfred Countryman, the man to be executed. The gunman's wife was also there along with his mother and father.

Outside the courthouse, two deputized companies of firemen were armed with saber and carbines to keep the crowd in line. And through this milling crowd two men worked their way toward the courthouse. One was the Rev. Crews, and the other was Countryman's attorney, Orrin J. Miller. The crowd was beginning to stir, for they knew that with the appearance of these two men, the hanging hour was approaching. Teams of horse drawn carriages and wagons were lined up outside waiting to take the gunman to his ill fated end. The execution was to take

place a few miles outside of town, where the County Fair was held the previous summer.

Both pro and con sentiment was being offered as to the morality of hanging a man in this civilized year of 1857.

"Sheriff Taylor was our friend," someone called out, "and Countryman didn't give him a chance. I say HANG him." This was followed by a chorus of mutterings about due process of the law, and mercy pleas were equally voiced. Also seen were two men with arms claiming that it wasn't right that Countryman be hung. People began shoving and pushing until finally one of the deputies brought the matter to a halt by threatening to arrest troublemakers. The crowd settled down, and some began to make their way to the hanging site.

For what seemed like an eternity to the waiting throng outside, (but only a fleeting instant to Countryman), the courthouse door finally opened and Sheriff Church appeared. He was quickly followed by Alfred Countryman, flanked by two deputies. The Rev. Crews and attorney O. J. Miller made their way behind them, with Countryman's family trailing. The men climbed aboard the wagons. The sheriff flipped the reins on the lead wagon and the horses, feeling the sting of leather, began the journey.

Fate seemed to be toying with the condemned man. While on the way to the fairgrounds Countryman's wagon had to be replaced twice. The first time because of a broken axle, and the second time because the horses couldn't be budged after stopping for a short rest. The crowd lined the trail all along the way, and Sheriff Sam Church pulled up the rain covering to afford the condemned man a little privacy from the curious spectators.

Arriving upon the grounds, one could see the scaffold had been built at the base of a hill, giving the surrounding throngs a commanding view of the hanging. The Rock Valley Democrat, (a weekly Rockford newspaper), modestly estimated the gathering in the neighborhood of twenty thousand. Among this crowd were the two men who earlier voiced their disapproval of the hanging. The sheriff was informed of them and he immediately





Al Gough

approached the two and disarmed them. The sheriff informed the crowd, as well as the two men, that he wouldn't stand for any misconduct, and went on with the proceedings. The sheriff was in no mood for any trouble, especially since it was he that had to throw the bolt that would drop the gunman to his death.

Alfred Countryman climbed the steps to the scaffold, it was quite obvious that he was very well composed, in spite of his ordeal. One could not help but wonder what was running through his mind as he waited. Perhaps his thoughts were drifting back to that fateful day of the shooting. It was a cold November morning as Alfred prodded his brother along, if they wanted to sell the cattle in town before noon. Al and John Countryman made their way up Elm Street, keeping the cattle intact. As the horses nudged the cattle past the livery stable, Al called out to his brother, "Stay with the cattle, I'm gonna hunt up Charlie Upton and see if he'd like to buy them."

Al spurred his horse up the busy street, alive with merchants preparing for a busy day in town. As he strode by the bank, he recognized Charlie Upton and hailed him.

"My brother and I heard you might be interested in buying a few head of cattle, Mr. Upton," Al stated.

"Let's have a look at your stock," said Mr. Upton.

"Sure,—my brother's herding them along now," Al said as he pointed up the street.

As the cattle approached them, Charlie Upton looked them over carefully, with his trained eyes.

"How much you gotta have?" said Charlie as the cattle began milling about them.

"What'll ya give?" Al asked.

"Well now, I gotta know what you want for them before I make an offer," Upton demanded.

Al Countryman ran his hand through his hair and said, "How about fifty five dollars."

"I'll give you forty-seven a head," Upton offered.



"Guess that's fair enough; we'll take it." Al accepted.

"I can't use them all though," Upton said, "'bout all I can use now are half."

"Why don't you take them all," said Countryman, annoyed with Charlie.

"Don't need 'em,—where'd these cattle come from anyway, they look pretty well rested to me," Upton said quizzically.

"From down South," Al went on, "we stopped and rested them outside town last night; figured we were too late to find a buyer, so we waited til morning."

"How come you drive them up here, they're not that good of stock to be driving," Upton asked.

Al became more annoyed, but answered as calmly as he could, "They're an unruly bunch and we want to get rid of them. And anyway the drive wasn't that far."

"I see," said Upton, then asked, "how about you boys taking them down to the slaughter house for me. I'll send a man along with, okay?"

"Don't really care to, but we will," said Al. "Maybe we can find another buyer for the rest of them on the way."

The three men and the cattle made their way toward the slaughter house, leaving a trail of dust behind. As soon as they were out of sight, Charlie Upton headed for the sheriff's office. He found him talking to Edson.

"Hi, Ed; morn'n', Sheriff," panted Upton, out of breath from his run up to the sheriff's office. "Just bought some livestock from a couple of fellows. Looked mighty peculiar to me. Thought maybe you'd like to know."

"What makes you think they looked peculiar Charlie?" asked Sheriff Taylor.

"They sold the cattle to me awful cheap. I figured they were worth twice what I gave for them; that's peculiar enough for me," said Upton.

"Hmmm, guess so," Sheriff Taylor said, rising from his chair and looking puzzled. He went on, "Thanks, Charlie, I'll look into it." Sheriff Taylor pulled the collar of his coat up around his neck as he left his office. It was getting colder this time of year, with each day that passed, and today was no exception. He headed up Elm Street and stopped suddenly as he passed Elisha Thompson's butcher store. Rubbing his chin, as if in deep thought, he turned and went into the store to see Elisha.

"Morn'n', Elisha," said the sheriff.

"Good morning to you, Sheriff," greeted Elisha.

"Elisha how 'bout doing me a favor?" asked the sheriff.

"Sure, John, just name it," said Elisha.

"We got a couple of fellows in town selling some cattle, and I think they may be stolen; I wonder if you could offer to buy a few head from them as cheap as you can. Maybe I could find enough evidence to arrest them," Sheriff Taylor said, he then went on to explain what he wanted Elisha to do in detail.

After he finished, the two went out to look for Countryman and the livestock. There was no need to, as they were headed right up Elm Street again on their way back from the slaughter house. Al Countryman headed his horse over toward Elisha and the sheriff.

"Which of you two owns this here butcher store," said Al, as he slid off his horse.

"I do," stated Elisha.

"Like to buy a few of these cattle?" asked Al Countryman, unaware that the other man with Elisha was the Sheriff of Winnebago County.

"Guess maybe I would, depending on how much you want for them," said Elisha.

Countryman, sensing Elisha's apparent willingness to buy, decided to up his price.

"How about seventy-five dollars a head," offered Al.

"Can't afford it," said Elisha, "How's about sixty-five?"

"I'd sure like to get seventy-five," Countryman said, holding his line.

"Nope, can't give you that, but I'll give you sixty-five dollars a head, and not a penny more," said Elisha, with a waving gesture of take it or leave it.

"Well if that's the best you can do, we'll take it," said Al Countryman.

"It's a deal, you take the cattle down in my back yard, and I'll go on up to the bank and draw out your money. We'll meet right back here in about fifteen minutes," suggested Elisha.

Alfred Countryman and his brother agreed, and began herding the cattle to the rear of the store. Sheriff Taylor and Elisha started up the street to the bank.

"You get the money; I'm gonna get a warrant for their arrest; I think I'll have enough to arrest them on if we can get them to sign a bill of sale. I'll have my deputy along just in case of trouble," the sheriff told Elisha.

Elisha went on to the bank and drew out the money, then waited until he saw the sheriff and his deputy, Will Thompson, headed up the street to meet him. He went out, and they met in front of the Young America Saloon.

"You let me handle it from here on out," said the sheriff. Elisha nodded, and the three men headed for the store, where the Countryman boys were waiting.

"Got the cattle in the yard?" asked the sheriff.

"All set!" said Al Countryman, not yet aware of what was happening.

"We have to have you sign this bill of sale," the sheriff said politely.

"Don't you trust us?" asked Al.

"It's not that; it's just that we like to have a bill of sale when we are dealing with people we don't know too well," the sheriff said, in a matter of fact tone.



Casiena Fones

Al Countryman took the paper and signed, giving the bill of sale to his brother, he said, "We just live about three miles south of here, no need of being suspicious."

"You say you live around New Milford area?" the sheriff asked as he took the signed bill from Al's brother.

"Up around the Kishwaukee-New Milford crossroads," Al said.

"How about coming down to the courthouse, there's a fellow by the name of Grant that lives out that way, maybe he can vouch for you," the sheriff offered.

Alfred Countryman began to feel a little uneasy, but just nodded, and the men all went off toward the courthouse. When they entered the building the sheriff told his deputy to stay with the Countryman brothers and he would go and find Mr. Grant. The sheriff and Mr. Grant appeared presently.

"Mr. Grant, I'd like you to meet the Smith boys, they say they live up around your area," the sheriff said.

"The Smith boys?" burst Mr. Grant, "These two fellows are the Countrymans."

"You sure Mr. Grant?" the sheriff asked, "They signed this bill of sale by the name of Smith."

"Of course I am, they borrowed my team back a few weeks ago," Mr. Grant said.

"I better tell you boys my name is John Taylor, and I'm the sheriff here in Winnebago County. Think you boys had better come along with me to the jailhouse," Sheriff Taylor said.

"You can't lock us up because we signed our name as Smith on a sheet of paper, Sheriff," objected Al.

"I'm arresting you two for suspected cattle rustling," the sheriff stated. "If you want me to go get you someone who can prove you are innocent, or who can help you, I'll go just as soon as you are locked up. And if you are innocent, you can go free and the County will make restitution."

The Countryman brothers didn't say anything, and the sheriff began searching them. The only thing he found was a single bullet in the vest pocket of Al Countryman.

"Where'd this bullet come from?" asked the sheriff.

"I was out deer huntin' the other day, and must have left it in my pocket by mistake," Countryman alibied.

"All right let's get going to the jail," the sheriff said as he held Al by the arm and started him out the door. Deputy Thompson held Al's brother by the back of his collar and followed behind.

Suddenly Alfred Countryman jerked free of the sheriff. And in a moment, he hurdled a fence and dashed up Elm Street. The Sheriff, though caught by surprise, responded quickly, and was in hot pursuit almost instantly. As Alfred Countryman ran, he had to cut right angles to keep the sheriff from gaining on him. The sheriff was gaining, in spite of Countryman's attempt to lose him.

"Stop him, stop him," the sheriff shouted as he chased Countryman down the street.

Countryman, without breaking stride, pulled out a pistol that he had cleverly concealed. As he approached the intersection of Elm Street, he turned back and fired a shot at the oncoming sheriff, who by now was only a few strides behind the frightened Countryman. Sheriff John Taylor felt the bullet strike him.

"Stop him, I've been shot," the sheriff cried as he staggered to a halt, and then finally toppled over into the dusty street.

Many people in the street had seen the whole thing happen, and were by now responding, by coming to the aid of the sheriff, and pursuing Countryman. The sheriff was taken into the nearby livery stable where he had died after just a few minutes. The gunman, still on foot, had been captured a few blocks away, without another shot being fired. Alfred Countryman must have felt fear at that moment like he had never known before as the angry mob that had captured him, heard that the sheriff was



dead. Not even now, as he faced the gallows before him, was he as frightened as he was then.

The Rev. Crews stepped to the front of the scaffold and gave a very moving prayer, and when he was finished, Sheriff Church asked Alfred Countryman if he wished to say anything before his time came. Alfred Countryman arose slowly, and began speaking softly at first, but gained strength as he went on.

"Gentlemen and Ladies," he began, "I don't know as I'll be able to address you very much. I am not able to make a speech. I thank the Lord there is One above to whom I can look. I should like all who can hear me, especially the young, to take warning and learn to fear God. You do not know when you will be called. My time is very short when I shall depart. It is near at hand, but I can die happy and hope to enter into a better world. I have had great trouble to make peace, and I thank God I have had a friend on earth to help me, direct me, and pray for me. I can go to Heaven with this crime of murder against me with a quiet heart; and when we all meet there, we shall find who is right and who is wrong. May God have mercy on the one I have left behind me, and have mercy on my two little children. May He have mercy on my dear father and poor mother; may He have mercy on my brothers and sister too, and bless them. May He have mercy on each of you, and on them; and may we all meet where sorrow is no more. I bid you all farewell, I am going home."

The sheriff then walked forward and said, "Agreeable to the order of the court, I shall now execute Alfred Countryman as announced."

The mask was then placed over his head, followed by the noose around his neck. And at exactly seventeen minutes past two the drop fell and Alfred Countryman was no more.

## IN AND OUT OF TIME

*Rosemary Marinaro*

*An image shrouded in mist passes by;  
Revolving thoughts enter and leave—  
Remembrances of winter's white  
and summer's green  
In a world both fated and timed.*

*A clock in mind ticks off the time  
Of love and hate and sorrow  
Buried griefs all crumpled up  
are smoothed and soothed  
And life is all tomorrow.*

## HOPE CHEST

*Cecil H. Hall*

*Help will arrive soon.  
Not that it is needed.  
Debts are too long overdue  
And interest increases steadily.  
Like the tail of a comet  
Our initial state of mind is being lost.  
Its replacement is present  
But will probably never be discovered.  
Continuity is not our strength  
Nor is piety our weakness.  
The braggard will someday be accepted  
For what he really is.  
Dreams will never take control  
Since there is nothing to take it from.  
Besides, the end is in sight.*



## REMEMBER CHARLEY SMITH

Rube Waddell has been enshrined in the Hall of Fame, thus assuring his name of immortality in our National past-time. And deservedly so, for Rube was undoubtedly one of the greatest left-handers of all time. But a fellow by the name of Charley Smith, who once dueled Rube on the Diamond, will not make the Hall of Fame. Nor will he be remembered for lesser accomplishments because of his unlikely name.

Bill Armour, who managed the Cleveland club back in 1904, was the recipient of one of those lesser accomplishments. Manager Armour had a pretty fair pitching staff when the drive for the pennant got underway. Addie Joss, Donohue, and Earl Moore were his starters. But as the season wore on, Joss and then Donohue were plagued with sore arms. The rest of the staff was in bad shape due to an abundance of problems. The only hurler that wasn't in bad shape was Moore. But he was taking the mound every other day, and that was beginning to wear him down.

While Manager Armour was having his troubles in the big time, a fellow by the name of Charley Smith was bending the cowhide around the bats of sand-lot hitters all over Cleveland. Charley had himself quite a curve ball, and was fast becoming a local legend.

One bright day the Philadelphia Athletics came to town. And with them came the great Rube Waddell, who was scheduled to pitch the opener. The opening game found a rather large crowd on hand to watch Rube perform. And among this throng (seated in the bleachers), was Charley Smith. As the teams went through

their pre-game drills, manager Armour was fretting about his riddled pitching staff. While Moore was the best he had, he was hardly a Rube Waddell. Better (he thought) to save Moore for the second game and start someone else against Waddell, since Rube was almost a cinch to win anyway. But who? Finally someone told Armour of Charley Smith, and that he was out in the stands.

Charley was called out of the bleachers and given a uniform. Manager Armour sent Charley out to the mound expecting the worst. Inning after inning, Charley hung on, while Waddell kept mowing them down. And when the dust had cleared Rube had struck out eleven batters, but Charley Smith had won the game. Charley also went on to win his second game against the old Baltimore club, by an 8-0 score. But that was the end of Charley's effectiveness, because he began to get knocked around the ballparks after those two starts. When the ailing hurlers regained their form Charley was sent to the minors. He returned again with the Boston Red Sox and Washington, and finally ended his playing days with the Chicago Cubs in 1910. Charley spent the last few years of his life in a Cleveland Sanitarium before he died in 1929.

Charley's only hope of immortality lessens with the passing on of each old timer, so let's carry Charley's banner, and re-tell of the day he came out of the stands, and beat the great Rube Waddell in his first big league ball game. Rube wouldn't mind.

## DANDELIONS

*Diane Palombi*

*Balls of  
downy butter  
splashed on emerald carpets,  
Simple beauties loved by so few.  
Oh, why?*



Maggie Patapack

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## THEY DO NOT LIKE ME

*Cecil H. Hall*

*Covered, my knee  
    Resembled a mountain.  
I studied it by the moonlight.  
    Then morning came  
And the old man tottered off  
    Leaping a scream as he left.  
I never discovered  
    Why he was taken from me.*

*It is said  
    That I am insane,  
    That I utter words  
        Which are unexplainable.  
It will be said again  
    Before the echo ceases.  
But now I must retire  
    For the hounds are released  
        By day.  
And they do not like me.*

## THE CIRCULAR ROAD

*Diane Palombi*

*Tomorrow, the cruel dance  
to forever;  
Forever, shrouded by the  
misty pain of soft, red dawn.*

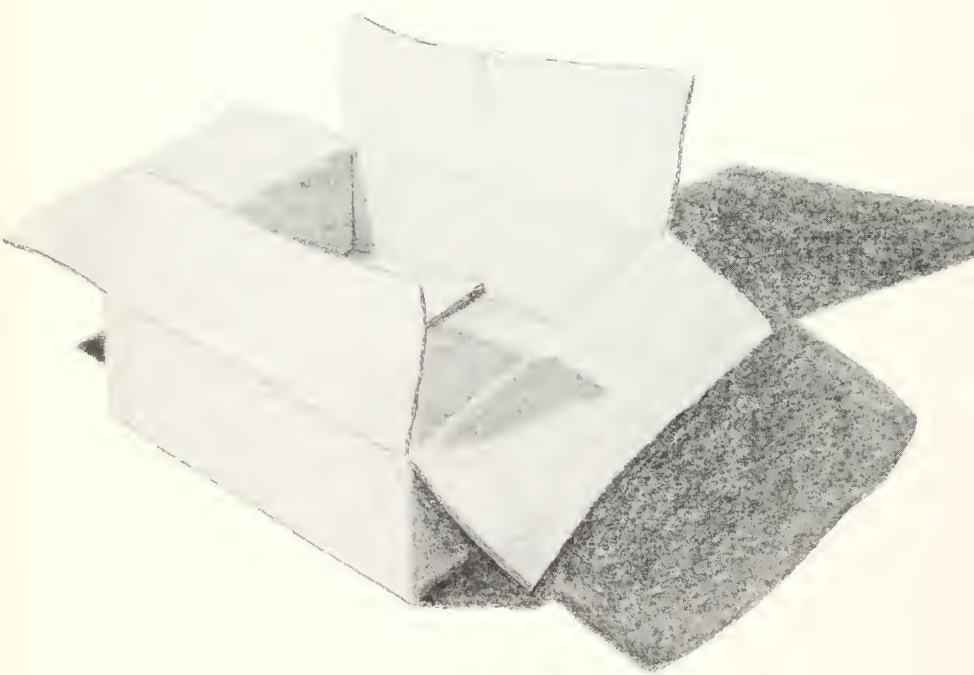
*Brilliant corona circled  
blackness, desperately trying  
to fill its craving depths.*

*And torment prayed  
in a barren whisper  
that lost identity  
in the violent fog of humanity.*

*A sharp, silent scream  
punctured an empty anchor  
and slashed the cross.*

*The self-spiral widened,  
reaching for a white-warm dream;  
And shrank back  
to its insignificant dot  
of beginning as it touched  
a gray-frozen reality.*

*Never began yesterday,  
cried today,  
prayed tomorrow,  
and died forever.*



Ed Haldeman

## AT THE "U OF L"

At twenty minutes to ten, Wednesday morning, I started climbing the dim northern stairwell in Stevenson Hall. The tan suitcase I carried weighed my right side down heavily. I extended my left arm which flailed wildly to maintain my equilibrium. The stairs were pervaded by light that was just a little too dim to be of any use. It was the kind of light that your eyes never adjust to.

My feet stepped sure-footedly up the fireproof, metal-rimmed cement stairs. On every other landing I stopped for an instant and read the abused decal on the double doors. Third floor. Fourth floor. Fifth floor. Then I kept climbing. The stairs ended abruptly at a balcony door and I pushed my way through the single door onto the sunlit roof.

I was blinded by the brilliance of the outside. The sky was one of those rare, absolutely turquoise skies. Everything was a bleached, hot white. I carefully locked and checked the door.

My eyes adjusted, and then I made my way across the unused slate floor for sunbathers to the opposite side. I climbed a small retaining fence and walked to the southern end of the building. The gravel crunched under my shoes.



When I got very close to the edge, I set the suitcase down, opened it and squatted beside it. I gently lifted the semi-automatic M-1 from it and placed it carefully on a towel I had spread out. Beside it I put my new Winchester 38 with a 20X scope. I placed ammunition all around me. I checked all my equipment to make sure all was in order. I glanced at my watch. It was almost ten to ten.

The sidewalks suddenly seemed to fill with people going to and leaving classes. I took the M-1 and aimed down at the small restaurant on the corner. In a booth next to the picture window sat a girl. Above her head a sign glowed an orange "Malts-Chicken-Steaks." I squeezed off three quick shots. The "Chicken-Steaks" dissolved and the windows shattered, and fell in two distinct actions. I would have to work fast now. I crawled over to the other side and lay down on my stomach. On the sidewalk between Stevenson and Threlkeld Hall about five groups of three and four were walking. I pointed the M-1 at one group. In it I could recognize the girl in my English class. Should I spare her . . . or get her first. I fired two shots at her and her head exploded like a pumpkin. Her group ran in all directions. They would make good "chicken-steaks" I thought humorlessly. I got one as she tried to hide behind a car, but I missed a third. The other groups saw what was happening and scattered as if someone was randomly tossing money at them. I fired quickly, reloaded and continued. I must have gotten six. A tall lanky boy ran to help a writhing girl. If it hadn't been a girl, I would have let him live.

Back to the other side now. I changed rifles to the Winchester, and watched the ignorant walk along, throwing their heads back in laughter and conversation. If they only knew what the next few minutes would bring them, I thought. I aimed carefully and got a kid coming through the stone gates onto Second Street. I aimed again and started scoring on the people coming past the Social Science Building. There on the island between First and Second Streets was one of Nick's girlfriends. I squeezed the trigger and one shot accelerated from the barrel. I watched her double up.



At that very instant a dirty black police car whipped up and two policemen leaped out. I could see 302 painted in large yellow numerals on its roof. I aimed at but missed both men. Two white police station wagons pulled up quickly, both on First Street.

I went back to the side facing Threlkeld. I got two more people who were running by. Then I saw a boy standing in his window on the third floor of Threlkeld Hall. Two of the slats in his venetian blinds were bent apart, and through the half-open blinds I could see the outline of his body. I hated him for his smugness. I fired through the blinds and watched the blinds lurch, followed by a sinking movement. That told me he paid for his boldness.

I stopped firing and looked at my watch. I could hear an irregular firing down there. It was ten o'clock. Were they still going to have ten o'clock classes? How much time do I have left? For the first time, I felt good. I wasn't angry anymore. I didn't hate anyone. I really felt good. There was no feeling like it. No troubles, no pressures. No one telling me what to do. I felt avenged for everything that was ever done wrong to me. I had a few minutes, maybe an hour at the most to do everything, and do it all over again. If there was just some way to get away. But no, it will be better this way. I would die happier than anyone. Anyone, living, dying or dead.

A sudden increase in volume of fire snapped me back. I knew I had to defend this new found feeling of wonderfulness. I must stay alive and enjoy it as long as possible.

I noticed a uniformed man climbing on top of the hut covering the air conditioner on the roof of Threlkeld Hall. I looked through my scope and saw the imminent danger. I shot at him and missed him in a shower of brick dust. I cocked the rifle and took much more careful aim. When I peered through the scope I saw him aiming his scoped rifle directly at me. I gently squeezed the trigger. As I awaited the gentle re c o i l



Tony Walker

## BELLONA'S BRIDEGROOM

*Jon Mann*

*Where is your courage now, Damascus-blade?  
Has it fallen again without vertigo?  
Where is the golden fabric of bright brocade?  
The promethian mantles glowing to and fro?  
The veneer, the gloss, the gaudy show?  
The roar and clamor of spring festival?  
The youth, the color, the grace, the glow?  
Into the night-shroud go one and all.*

*Where are the passions it essayed?  
And where the sobs it made to flow?  
Where the furious fervor it portrayed?  
For the disdainful universe to see and know?  
Othello's choler, and Desdemona's woe?  
Cleopatra's lust, and Antony's gall?  
The ambitious Macbeth and amorous Romeo?  
Into the night-shroud go one and all.*

*The grand-teaser falls; the play is played.  
The thunder racks, and the winds blow.  
The Lord Paramount troops undismayed.  
The lightning huddles with the snow.  
Where be now those gamblers of Diderot?  
The noise of battle? The lover's call?  
The colors dancing row on row?  
Into the night-shroud go one and all.*

i am walking down railroad tracks

*Tony Walker*

*i am walking down railroad tracks  
kicking rocks  
counting ties  
independent  
proud  
free as an unhuman  
lonely*

*i am walking down railroad tracks  
kicking rocks counting ties  
my shoe is loose  
i stop to tie it  
the lace breaks  
i cry then laugh  
wondering am i insane  
empty thirsty tired*

*i am walking down railroad tracks  
kicking rocks counting ties  
wondering can life being real  
make me feel dead*

## THE CORN PALACE

Just before the turn of the century, a palace of corn was built in eastern South Dakota to advertise the possibilities of a corn growing state. Each year since that time the citizens of Mitchell have been nailing cobs of corn on a square brick structure topped with colorful domes and minarets and named, "The Corn Palace".

At Indian summer time each year the entire exterior and portions of the interior are covered with corn—a near 3,000 bushels of it, multicolored, red, blue, yellow and white—arranged in patterns and outlined with grasses and grains that remain in place all year.

In a series of panels there are scenes carrying a theme, picturing wild game, hunting, and pioneer history. Each year a new theme is selected. One year showed "Holidays and Special Events in South Dakota" for the theme. From this the Indian artist designed a scene depicting the holiday, New Year's—a New Year's babe and Father Time, bells, and confetti. A scene in Easter time had a church, an Easter basket and bunny. A panel on Independence Day and the American flag, Liberty Bell, and the Statue of Liberty. Thanksgiving Day was shown with



Ed Haldeman

the horn-of-plenty and a pilgrim giving thanks before a church. Christmas presented a white cross showing the spirit of the day, Santa, reindeer, a child, Christmas tree, stockings full of toys in gift packages.

The Indian flavor in the design is seen and felt at first glance. Decorations are planned by an American Indian artist, Oscar Howe, living in Mitchell and teaching art at the college. He first takes water colors and paints miniature copies, then outlines them with chalk on tarpaper which is nailed to the building.

Workmen saw each ear of corn lengthwise with a small power saw, and they stand on scaffolds to choose the ears of corn to match the Indian colors, and nail them in place.

Near the entrance of the structure a mural pictured above the stage says, "Welcome!"—Indian style—with a sign in the clouds above the scene of the city.

Other interior panels show Indian hunting scenes, an Indian showing another Indian how to hunt, a chief giving corn to a white man, a white man's log cabin, and an Indian's tepee.

There are 5,000 seats in the big auditorium. The festival lasts for five days. Usually fourteen performances from big-name orchestras and vaudeville acts in the country are scheduled. There are nine blocks of carnival midway, but the central attraction is this corn-plastered Corn Palace with multi-colored domes and minarets still attracting crowds to Mitchell.

This year, 1967, the Corn Palace festival presents the Jack Benny show. Jack Benny, of T. V., radio, and stage, America's best loved comedian, brings with him the Buddy Rich orchestra. There will be the usual nine blocks of midway and free street act, twice daily. An added attraction will be high school bands from all over South Dakota.



## FOG

*Diane Palombi*

*Sky as gray as Amish dress,  
A moist haze of cloud  
stretches from here to heaven,  
Shrouding the raw fields  
and desolate forest  
in its tranquil mist.  
An agitated city balks  
at its burdensome cloak.  
The surge of traffic persists,  
But at a hushed rate.  
Slowly,  
A light smiles  
and absorbs the mist.*

## THE WAR IS BEING FED

*Charles Fry*

*The beating of the drum  
And the blowing of the bugle  
Echoed on the hillside  
Then settled on our guns.  
Dawn mist was breaking  
Letting in the sun  
And a soldier boy came running  
Carbine in his hand  
Bullets whined before us  
And the boy slumped dead.  
The battle now is raging,  
The war is being fed.*



## THE ADVENTURE OF THE PSYCHEDELIC SLEUTH

It was a hot summer day in the year 1967 that an unusual case was brought to the attention of my good friend Shrock Homes, renowned London detective. My friend had risen earlier than I that morning and while I was still breakfasting, he was already at work on the problem that had kept him up so late the night before. It seems that a few days before he had found a wrist watch at the scene of a crime and in the process of subjecting it to the minute examination for which he is famous, he had completely disassembled it. For the last week he had been trying to put it together again.

"There must be a solution!" he exclaimed, interrupting my assault on an uncooperative grapefruit.

"Really, Homes," I replied, "why don't you forget about that watch? You are not likely to get any further with it than you did with that murder case you were working on a year ago."

"You mean that case with the clock-maker who only worked during the dark hours?"

"Exactly. The case I recorded as 'The Adventure of the Nightwatchman'."

Homes would have answered, but at that moment there was a knock on our door.

I opened the door to a distraught looking gentleman in his mid-thirties. Although not actually overweight, he had the phlegmatic look of a man not used to manual labor. But it was evident that something had recently occurred which had upset

his way of life, for he was wearing old work clothing and beads of sweat had formed on his brow.

"Ah," said Homes, brightening. "I see you have come to consult me about something that has happened just a short time ago."

"Amazing," said our client, who had taken the well-cushioned chair that Homes always reserves for his visitors. He believes that they can bear the shock of hearing his rates much better when comfortably seated. "It is just as you say. My name is Jacob Smith; I live just a few blocks from here. Just half an hour ago I accidentally overheard a band of thieves plotting a crime."

"Jacob Smith? That name sounds familiar," said Pooles.

"Perhaps you read about my prize African violets. They were mentioned in the paper just recently."

"Of course. But continue with your story."

"Mr. Homes, being a rather sedate person, I seldom leave the house save for a few occasional errands. I find that watering the flowers in my greenhouse is quite enough physical labor for one day. As you can well imagine, as a result of this inactivity, my yard has gone to weed. Although I've cut them down in the immediate vicinity of the house, in one corner of my lot they have grown into a veritable jungle. I would have been content with the situation had not some officials from the health department called on me one day and said that I must cut down that jungle. They said that the weeds were harmful or poisonous or something and that it was illegal to let them grow.

"So today I resolved to cut them down. I started my task quite early this morning and in a few hours I had cut right into the very middle of them. Knowing my wife couldn't see me from the house, I sat down to rest.

"I don't remember how long I rested; I believe I must have dozed off for a bit. But when I woke up, I saw three uncouth looking fellows staring into the weeds and talking among themselves. I thought at first that they surely had seen me, but ap-

parently the weeds were thick enough to conceal me for they talked as if they had no idea they were being observed."

"What was it they said?"

"I don't know, exactly. I was some distance away, and they were talking in low voices. But I am certain they were plotting some evil scheme. I only remember a few of the words they said. One said, 'Look at all that pot', to which one of the others answered, 'We'll really go on a trip tonight.' After that I could hear no more."

"How would you describe these plotters?" Homes asked.

"All three were very unkempt. They had long uncombed hair and shaggy beards. Their clothing was very unusual; I have never seen the like of it before. It was oddly styled and exotically colored."

"But you are certain that these uncouth fellows were plotting some outrage?"

"Mr. Homes, I am certain of it."

"Can you remember nothing else?"

"Why, yes, there is one thing I have forgotten. One of the three was wearing a button that said, 'Flower Power.' I could make no sense of it."

"Thank you, Mr. Smith," said Shrock Homes, extending his hand as a signal the interview was over. "I will take up your case. But one more thing: can the greenhouse you mentioned be seen clearly from where the three were standing?"

"Why yes, Mr. Homes."

"Thank you. That is all the information I need. You may expect me at your house ten o'clock this evening. Incidentally, don't cut down any more of those weeds."

Our client left, utterly mystified.

"Really, Homes," I said. "From the way you are talking, one would think you had the case already solved."

"I have," he replied.

Shrock Homes went back to working on his wrist watch. Although I tried, I could get no more information out of him.



Al Gough

Ten o'clock that night Homes and I called on Mr. Smith. He was eagerly awaiting us and was anxious to have us come in, but Homes declined.

"There is work to be done outside," he said.

"Have you solved the case, then?"

"Oh yes. It was obvious from the start. The three fellows you saw are planning to steal your prize African violets. Hence their references to 'pot'. What they meant was 'flower pot.' They intend to take your violets in the dead of night and go on a 'trip' with them—take them to a rival flower fancier, that is. They were here this morning to examine the area and form their plans before dark."

"But what about the button saying 'Flower Power'?"

"They are obviously professional flower thieves."

"But of course!" explained Mr. Smith. "What a fool I've been. What are we to do?"

"We will hide in your weeds until the thieves come. The three of us should be able to surprise them and overcome them with ease."

The weeds in which we concealed ourselves were the same that Mr. Smith had been cutting that morning. They were indeed thick; I had no fears we would be seen. However, I could not help but remember that the health department had told Mr. Smith that the weeds were poisonous. I asked Homes if there was any danger.

He examined the weeds and gave me his expert opinion. "I don't believe so. These weeds are of the hemp family. They are somewhat hallucinogenic, but there is no need to worry. I don't see why the health department is so concerned."

Thus assured, I settled back and waited for the thieves.

We did not have to wait long. Half an hour after we had hid ourselves we heard footsteps approaching us. At a signal from Homes, the three of us sprang upon the thieves. The fight was brief, for we had taken them completely by surprise. We soon had them lined up against a wall of the house.



"Doctor, give me your flashlight," said Homes. I handed it over and marveled as Homes brought its beam upon our captives. They were just as Mr. Smith had described them: unkempt hair and beards, oddly styled clothing, and looking as if they had never taken a bath.

"I see that I have erred in at least one aspect," said Homes at length. "Far from the hardened criminals I had expected, I see these young men are new to crime. It would be a capital mistake if we were to send these fellows to jail and thereby leave crime the only way of life open to them."

"But what else can we do?" asked Mr. Smith.

"I suggest we allow them to perform some useful task to make up for their intended wrong-doing."

"Like what?" I asked.

Homes faced our three captives. "First thing tomorrow morning," he said in a commanding voice, "you three will come here and finish cutting the weeds for Mr. Smith."

The three youths, already seeing the evil of their ways, eagerly agreed, promising to come promptly the next morning. Since there was nothing else to do, we all went home.

Mr. Smith called late the next afternoon. "Mr. Homes, I want to thank you for the wonderful way in which you handled my case."

"The boys did come and cut your weeds, then?"

"Yes indeed. They even raked them up and carried them away for me. It is marvelous, knowing that they have given up their former ways."

"Yes," replied Shrock Homes, "that is indeed gratifying. But I haven't time to talk now. Inspector Lester of Scotland Yard has asked me to help him on a case. A large amount of narcotics has just been dumped on the London blackmarket. I must track it to its source!"

So saying, he reached for his deerstalker and strode out of the room.



Catherine L. Miller



## CONFESSION NINETEEN

*Vicki Judah*

*Tomorrow may be stolen by the night comin fallin  
And rippin at the heart of yesterday  
But the sky's convulsed with mirth  
Of long lost laughter caught up in the trees—  
So command the tallest branches  
That Remembrance might have some.  
Refrain: the ballad voices sung by idols stolen  
From the eternal highway of hope, taken from them  
A truth to direct, correct, and mold to my own  
To trip on later 'cause  
"Nothin ain't real, cept somethin I feel."  
Like the memory of the fallin rain.  
I understand but can't retain  
The time I ain't got room for  
That will trip up behind and slam the sounds  
I shove into now back into then and on again.  
Shadows, drunken cobwebs dancin backwards,  
Screamin loud and stoppin in the dust  
Still can't kill the thoughts of the words they're tearin on.  
God rest Ye, Mary Gentle One,  
And forgive me my trespasses  
Cause I'm a long way from home  
And the sun's sleepin late.*

## PORTRAIT OF A RIGHTEOUS WOMAN

A worn, black Bible lay on a miniature stool next to her straight-backed chair. Thelma, small and frail looking, hunched over her knitting, as if to keep from being forced into an upright position. Her attire consisted, as it usually did, regardless of season, of cotton peddle-pushers, an obscurely printed blouse, a sweater, and a shawl. The only variation she made in dress was that from September until late in May she wore knit slippers and wrapped a heavy woolen afghan around her legs and feet. Sometimes, on afternoons in early August (which can be stifling in southern Indiana) she moved from the living room out onto the spacious front porch of the large brown frame house.

The house, which had been twenty years ago, a noisy place full of children's laughter, was now conspicuously silent. The monotonous mood of the house was in perfect correlation with Thelma herself. Her drab brown hair was sparse as was the scratched furniture of the living room. Her waxen face almost matched the yellowed drapes which were closed permanently to darken the room in which she spent so much time. Her mouth seemed only a bluish line of severity drawn across the lower center of this tiny face. Grey eyes, often so striking against a darker complexion, were only vaguely moist-looking areas surrounded by red swollen rims in the darkened, extremely sunken hollows of her sallow face. She moaned softly now and then. Arthritis in her shoulders and arms caused her severe pain, along with a persistent aching in her chest. Thelma told the neighbors that knitting made her feel worse, but she knew how people appreciated presents she had knit herself.



Al Gough

People who visited Thelma and Rufus often wondered what it was that happened twenty years ago to that happy young couple with their two charming children. Old picture albums showed Thelma and Rufus arm in arm with their own reproductions standing before them on the porch of the big house. But that was a long time ago and no one knows what caused the change.

It was the same house, minus the children, and the same two people, minus the look of gaiety. Thelma and Rufus seldom even verbally recognized each other's presence anymore. Rufus came home from his job as a salesman in a feed and grain store at five o'clock every night and became at once a silent entity as he entered the house. His supper was on the table. He ate alone. He listened to the radio or watched television and went to bed. Rufus bowled on Wednesday nights but it was, as is obvious, of little incidence in Thelma's life. So Thelma, who could not even join the widows of town went on from day to day alone in the house.

For many years Thelma only knit, read her Bible, and scanned a few miscellaneous books from a mail-order club she belonged to. The report on her daily life to the town was very brief. Only the postlady, who sorted mail, knew of her correspondence and Rufus never offered, or, for that matter, released, any information concerning her. She had only one friend who stopped to visit her about twice a month and the rest of the town believed Thelma wished no callers. Bea, her one friend, knew this wasn't so. She was quite a social person herself and was very active in all of the church activities and was even the secretary of the church Bible study group, the Ladies of God. One evening when the object of meditation was solitude, the conversation, or spiritual discussion as it was called, turned to Thelma's way of life. Bea, who had probably been waiting for some time for the subject to arise, proceeded to explain to the group that Thelma had told her that she would like to see more people, but that she would not allow herself to sadden anyone with her burdens of sorrow. So commendable was this explanation that the Ladies of God began visiting often. Eventually they began holding their weekly meetings there on Wednesday evenings.

## Mary Lou Cain

Thelma chatted with her guests and was a gracious hostess. Often though, it seemed as if her voice were giving way to a whimper. This condition, combined with her continually swollen eyes, caused her to look and sound as though she had just finished or was about to cry. No one has ever seen her cry, though, and as the Ladies have explained, it is her righteousness and Christian love which have given her such strength. They are correct, at least, in the premise that no one has ever seen her shed a tear.

She did not cry when their daughter, Ivy, disgraced the entire family by running around with a divorced man from a town nearby. Thelma knew she did what was right to send Ivy away because of the shame. Ivy never did come back, but the postlady reported to the town that the letters from Ivy to her mother were returned, unopened, to Ivy up in Chicago. Everyone knew she must be a tramp anyway, living up there in the city and the way she had been when she was younger. Just four years ago, when Thelma's son, himself the father of two children, was sent to prison for the sexual violation of a minor boy, she did not cry. Rufus went to see him once before the trial, but Thelma was so disappointed and heartbroken she could not bear to see him.

She seldom speaks of her children. She once confided to the Ladies, though, that her greatest fear was to herself become tainted by the evil of godlessness. The Ladies know what a good woman she has been and that she did all she could to raise her children toward a good life. Bea once remarked how strange it was that Thelma had suffered so when she had always been so devoted to the laws of God. Thelma is said to have replied with a sigh, as she often does, "I have tried so".

## 1945 YEAR OF DECISIONS

*A book review*

Harry S. Truman, the author, was the only person capable of, or qualified enough to write *1945 Year of Decisions*. Granted the obvious fact that this is an autobiography, one must also consider his key role as United States President and the possession of important, comprehensive data that the office demands.

Biased as he must certainly be, Mr. Truman is still candid in his provincial way. The inclusion of letters to his family indicates his wish to display the Hometown All-American Hero aspect of his character. The fact that this book is a compilation of historic data and not a philosophical treatise or, for that matter, a scholarly evaluation of past events also causes one to realize Harry Truman's own awareness of his inadequacies. Thus, it is safe to assume the frankness of his statements and regard his bias as only a circumstantial by-product. It is therefore contended that his desire to make the facts known, plus, perhaps, the resulting monetary gain, influenced Harry S. Truman in writing this book, and that his position as President made him the only possible author.

There were two main themes which dominated this book. The first one, obviously, was a detailed account of the events—the eventually resolved foreign and domestic issues, regardless of certain idealistic proposals—which occurred in 1945. The second theme was the justification of actions that he and his colleagues took in regard to these events by describing cause-effect relationships and/or by omission.

The first theme was carried out in chronological form. The year 1945 was filled with change and crisis; witness the international impact of Franklin D. Roosevelt's death and of World War II's devastation. The former enhanced the confusion of the U.S. role



in the latter. Yet, many major problems were solved, and the world acquired a postwar peace.

April 12, 1945, the date of Roosevelt's death, marks the beginning of Truman's Presidency. It was not the birth of some new brain child of liberal idealism, nor the death of F.D.R.'s programs. Rather, Truman's role became that of a carriage driver with a corpse giving directions. And the horse, feeling the reins' slack, took the advantage to set a slightly different course. In striving to maintain this situation, Truman wisely chose to retain much of F.D.R.'s cabinet. Roosevelt was a cabinet unto himself, but without the knowledge of the superficial collection of men, Truman would have been far more ignorant of the problems at hand.

America of 1945 was faced with four main problems: the winning of World War II (including both the European and Japanese theaters), the reconstruction of the war-devastated areas, the creation of the United Nations, and the settlement of domestic problems which had been kept in check fairly well by wartime emergency measures.

The first of these problems, the winning of WW II, was brought about through the co-operation of the allied forces. Certainly, the U.S. was burdened with a greater percentage of the current war-time cost, both in men and material; but Truman realized Europe's exhaustion and placed primary emphasis on winning the war, despite the cost. In this area particularly, Truman followed F.D.R.'s plans. With the European victory complete, he relied heavily upon the previous Yalta agreements for structuring reparations, allied occupation, and reconstruction. He read the reports and took counsel from Secretary Byrnes and Prime Minister Churchill. He did everything possible to follow Yalta's decisions.

Potsdam provided the opportunity for actually meeting both Churchill and Stalin in person and for joint resolutions of war-created problems. Truman found Stalin to be aggressive, moody, and not the least bit inclined to uphold any Yalta commitments which did not benefit Russia. But he was not as directly opposed to Stalin's proposals as was Churchill. Perhaps in this respect, Truman was more realistic in calculating Stalin's bargaining power than was Churchill, although his evaluation could be re-



garded as naivete. Whatever the personality judgement, Truman wished not to create friction between the U.S. and Russia. After all, he was aware of his second-hand Yalta information and of the definite need for Russian aid in the Japanese theater of the war.

Despite the circumstantial difficulties, the majority of accomplishments were made in much the same vein as Yalta had predicted. Truman was forced to formulate his own policy in only two major areas: the establishment of Eastern European governments and the victory over Japan. The first one had implied Yalta restrictions, but Stalin worked around them. The second was worked out by careful planning which embodied a few serious flaws. In regard to these faults, Truman affected the so-called "Sell Out at Potsdam" and assumed too much authority for making decisions without the consent of Chiang Kai-shek. Because of his need for the "Yalta Crutch," he over-compensated in the Japanese war policy.

Truman had learned to be wary of Stalin and set the Japanese policy so as to strictly limit Russian participation, except in the areas which had already been given away. The victory over Japan in August, 1945, was more organized than was Europe's. With this success, Truman eventually came to formulate his own plans rather than adhere to F.D.R.'s.

In regard to the reconstruction of Europe, Yalta was again the criteria for policy making. The U.S. carried the major portion of the expense—shown by the Marshall Plan. The aim was to rebuild Europe so that it might not only help itself but would also become a political and economic ally in later years. Along with the actual rebuilding went the prevention and/or elimination of widespread famine and poverty. For this end, America continued wartime food limitations almost two full years after victory. Also included in this reconstruction, although not directly, was the Truman Doctrine which gave aid to Greece and Turkey in the fight against Communism.

Coinciding with the last phase of the war effort was the organization of the United Nations. Truman was wise in avoiding Wilson's mistakes. As a result of this and public opinion at the time, the U.N. was created as a world peace-keeping body. Tru-



Evangeline Avery

man understood its importance and placed much faith in its proposed function. In considering just the year 1945, he actually believed it would work.

Domestic problems proved to be another area in which Truman had to make his own decisions. His Twenty-One Point program was an indication of his acceptance of individual policy-making responsibility. The numerous strikes — particularly John L. Lewis's — and the potential postwar inflation were two issues which he handled in reflex-Truman fashion. The strikes were settled by prompt and forceful action—by either judicial means or others. The potential inflation, which would have created even more housing and food shortages than were already present in 1945, was checked by an extension of wartime limitations. Demobilization of the troops and the conversion of industry to peacetime production were also somewhat domestic issues (although more often considered war children) and were handled in an organized way. Education was the solution for the former, gradual expansion of the consumer market for the latter. It would be incorrect to suggest that there were no hurdles left unconquered, but the general effect was conducive to a stabilization of American society.

The second main theme of the book *1945 Year of Decisions*, that of justification, can be clearly seen in three major areas: Truman's personal difficulties as President after F.D.R.'s death; his handling of the war; and his policymaking with regard to domestic problems.

Truman distinctly eulogized Roosevelt in the first quarter portion of this book. He wrote of F.D.R.'s personal strength and authoritative power. By making his own decisions seem so unequal to Roosevelt's capabilities, Truman justified his inadequacies—his evident lack of knowledge and grooming which the Presidency demanded. Also, by praising F.D.R. and his policies, Truman acquired the necessary rationale for implementing the "Great One's" programs. In case of failure, he wouldn't have had to accept the responsibility.

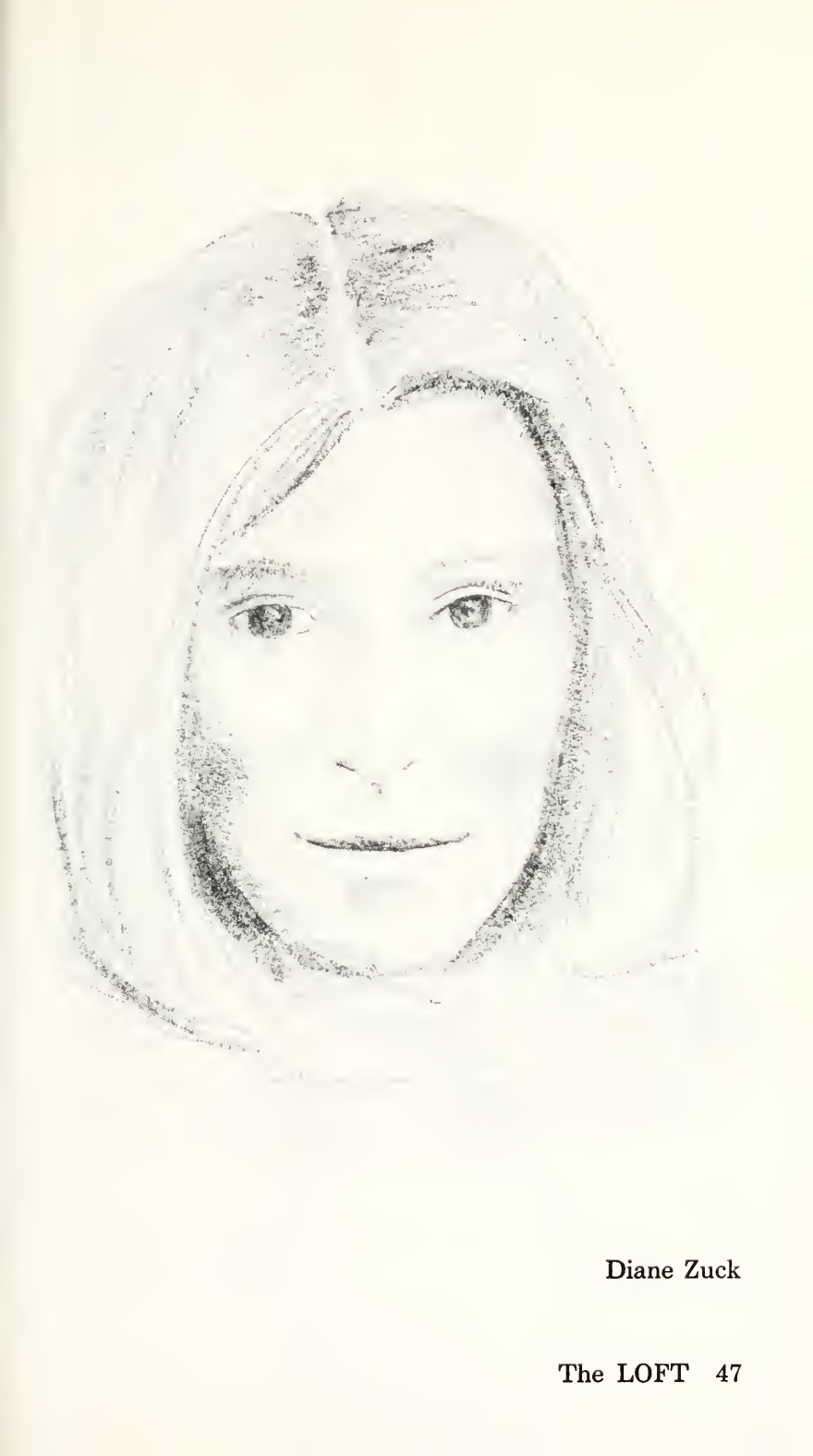
Truman's handling of the war via the use of the Yalta Crutch and other of Roosevelt's plans gave him yet another possible

scapegoat in case of failure. Also, by stating that his advisers were those same people who had worked for F.D.R., he could safely record the historic data. He had a built-in justification for his decisions because he was “forced” to rely upon other men’s opinions. Truman not only relied on F.D.R.’s image, but on Churchill’s also. His dependence on Churchill at Potsdam to live up to Yalta’s agreements gave Truman’s decisions an air of moral correctness. When Atlee replaced Churchill, Truman could only hope that British foreign policy hadn’t changed, too.

Only in domestic policy making did Truman strive to justify his *own* actions. Playing upon the “mother-God-country-and-apple-pie” sympathies, he branded John L. Lewis as a traitor to his country. The coal strike threatened the welfare of America: Lewis defied the U.S. Government: therefore, Truman was acting solely in the public interest. Controlling inflationary prices was also for the public good—at a time when the public, like a child, disliked the discipline. All other areas of domestic policy were handled in much this same stubborn, instinct-oriented Truman manner.

In evaluating this book, one can clearly see the simplicity of form which Harry S. Truman follows. This form, which is a complement to Truman’s objectives in writing, should be examined in a favorable light. The content, likewise, should be judged accurate and fair—as much as bias will allow. The explanation of this book’s second theme might in part be considered a criticism, although Truman certainly could have done a better whitewash job.

It must be stated that one can easily predict the content and structure of *1945 Year of Decisions* by simply understanding H. S. Truman. The converse of this statement is also true. This is a valuable primary-source book for its historic data and for its firsthand portrait of Truman, but it contains few surprises for a serious history student. The only important one encountered during this reading was the need for altering Truman’s image. Typically characterized as “foul-mouthed”, he swears only four times in 616 pages. Harry may have “given ’em Hell”, but in the book, he did it as a deacon.



Diane Zuck

## HECATE

*James Katz*

*Oh God! !*

*Looking pretty for all the boys  
Her empty head doesn't match her body  
"Say, see you tomorrow?"  
She'll say  
looking up  
not wanting a grain of sand to leave her beach  
Laughing a witch's laugh behind her crooked smile*

*How many carry her bayonets in their guts?  
her words put bricks in the pit of your stomach  
her hands make your neck weak  
and your ears pound  
How many have her pain in their bowels?*

*You'll smile weakly and reply  
"Yes,"  
of course*











## The LOFT

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## PROLOGUE

The LOFT is a student written, student edited magazine. It strives to create a pure medium through which Rock Valley students can realistically and freely express themselves.

This varied collection of ideas was evaluated on the basis of Rock Valley's characteristic literary achievement; yet it is to be regarded as but one plane of a multidimensional college logo. Its complements are found in academic pursuits, theater productions, community services, and the everyday human throng in the Student Center.

With this in mind, the editorial staff of the LOFT conveys its gratitude to those creative people who have added refined emphasis to the student voice.

Diane M. Williams

## AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENT

Cover design . . . . .	Anne Langsholt
Art . . . . .	Anne Benson
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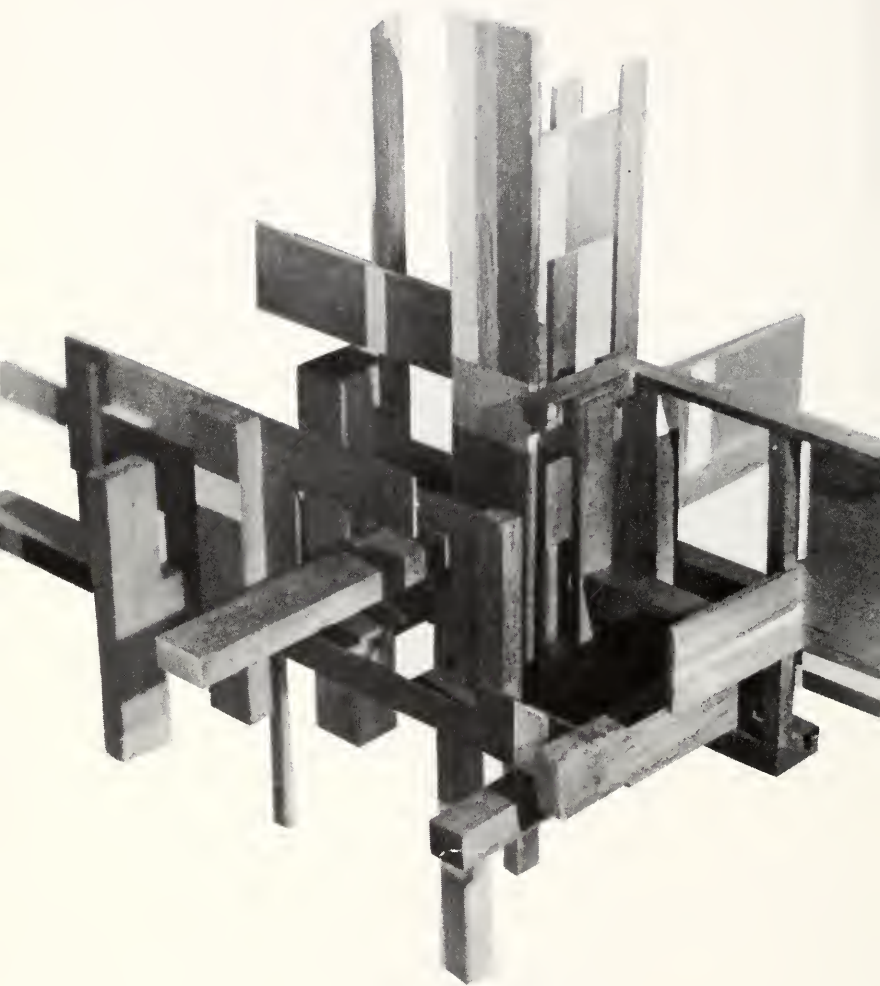




## RAIN-PRAYER

*Tim Karney*

*He spoke to me tonight.  
With the rain.  
The ever-present rain.  
That personal rain  
that said "You are Alive."  
I lifted my face which  
the drops anointed.  
I spoke by my silence.  
Faith restored, doubts shattered,  
The rain and I embraced.  
Peace was the rain,  
And understanding,  
And forgiveness  
And quiet.  
It still whispers to me  
through the window  
like Matthew, Mark,  
Luke and John in a  
vesper.  
This moment is eternal  
as the ground and I  
drink his life.*



Steve Johanson  
*Photo by Peter Herdklotz*

## A MOURNER'S INQUEST

God is dead. How do I know? Because I see thousands of people go to His funeral at His tomb every Sunday, but they do not cry. They simply listen to meaningless benedictions with empty heads, sing two or three dirges that have no tune and begrudgingly donate a pittance to His memorial fund. Then, silently, they mouth the Lord's Prayer over His lifeless body. At last they file out joyously, for funerals are such depressing rituals, but as everyone knows, one must do his duty and pay his indifference, if not respect to the dearly departed.

How did God die? I do not know. All I know is that He is dead. Perhaps He had a heart attack due to shock from the shape this world has gotten itself into. Or maybe He died in Viet Nam, and all the Heavenly Host was sent a Purple Heart and the Congressional Medal of Honor. Or just possibly He was lynched during one of the civil rights riots, simply because no one could decide just what color He really was.

But you ask, if God is dead how can the earth still turn? And how can the rain still fall and the birds still sing? If God were really dead, wouldn't all these things come to an end? Wouldn't they die, too? Well, why should they? The rain or the birds or the planet Earth itself didn't kill God. They didn't even break any of the Ten Commandments. They obey only the laws God has set down for them — the laws of Nature. But have we? No! We make up our own rules and play the game of life the way we want to. We have forgotten that this is not a game of solitaire. And yet, for all our intelligence, opportunities and just general

advantages in life over the other living things on the earth, do we seem to be getting along any better than they are? God is not dead to the birds, flowers or trees. But God is dead to human beings. Someway, somehow, somewhere we have killed Him, and we are the only ones who can raise Him from the dead to bring hope, beauty, and goodness back into our world where it belongs, in the form of a church, not a tomb and in the form of a live God, not a dead one.

## FOOTSTEPS

*Diane Palombi*

*When first you left me,  
your footsteps echoed awhile.  
Now they throb silently.*

## BARAKA

*Zara*

*Quiet lover,  
the strength of your voice  
resounds puritan truth as joy.  
By your touch . . . I*

*Gentle lover,  
the firmness of your hand  
grasps warm, painless reality.  
By your touch . . . I am*

*Humble lover,  
the glory of your manhood  
sears rejection's festering sore.  
By your touch . . . I am born.*



Ron Labunski

## TO BE A MAN

*Charles A. Voseles*

*If I would hollow a tunnel,  
And go within and become an ant,  
Then I would no longer be a man;  
Oh, what a pity that would be,  
For then I would lose my opportunity,  
To step upon my fellow man.*

## HUMANITY

*Charles A. Voseles*

*I once sat down,  
And tried to scribble a verse;  
And journeyed nowhere,  
For it lacked a part of me—  
Humanity.*





Anne Langsholt

## PROCRASTINATION

Putting things off is an art that I have cultivated to the utmost degree of perfection, particularly in the area of term papers. During my first days of classes this semester, I was assigned several such papers, and eagerly I awaited them. I would take my time and do a thorough job on each, creating masterpieces that would truly prove myself as a student. The very day that these papers were assigned, I went to the library and took out several books for my research. They would not be due until the end of the semester, but if I was to do them well, I would have to begin early. Setting these books on my desk, a wave of satisfaction and pride swept over me. What fine papers these were going to be!

Several days, a week, and then a month went by. How fast the time seemed to go. I was so busy! Sometimes I would glance at the books lying closed, gathering dust on my desk and would feel a tinge of guilt. But, there was always tomorrow. Maybe then I'll have more time. It was not long afterward that I received a telephone call from the library. Several books that I had taken out were overdue and had run up enormous fines. Thoroughly disgusted at myself and the books, I returned them and paid the fines. Never did I want to set my eyes on those books again! Anyway, I had two months to do my papers. That was eight weeks, fifty-six days, not including Christmas vacation, surely plenty of time.

Well, my three term papers are due tomorrow and here I sit. To my left are some scratched notes that I did before supper last night, and an old typewriter that I borrowed from a neigh-

bor. On my right lay three opened books, each on a different subject to "supplement" my reports; and, in front of me are several sheets of blank paper. It is getting late; it must be nearly 12:00, and I am very tired. School starts early for me tomorrow morning, and I wanted to wash my hair tonight. Besides that, I promised to write a friend tonight, too. Perhaps I can do the papers in the morning. Maybe if I set the alarm to wake me up early . . .

## ON DESOLATION

*Linda McNaught*

*In the black night I look for a sunbeam,  
But all the day, shining people have taken them.*

*Only the endless cobwebs among the stars  
Remain for the dreamers in the dark.*

## I REMEMBER . . .

*Sister M. Richarius, O.P.*

### *I*

*I remember the twig I broke off that first day  
when we walked, surrounded by rain, down the hill.*

*The twig was small—I had not noticed where*

*I took it from,*

*and meant to fling it along the way—*

*but by mistake I put it in my pocket,*

*which, in spite of its warmth,*

*was empty.*

*I brought it out that night, and then*

*I couldn't throw it. I saw*

*the scars of its severing; I admired its  
suffering.*

*For days I half-looked for the whole tree,*

*thinking I would return the twig.*

*When I saw its marks again*

*I could do nothing but keep it.*

*For weeks I carried the twig in my hand*

*from place to place*

*searching for resemblance:*

*No other life was like this.*

*I doubted then if such had ever been.*

*And I doubted the twig's scars*

*and its suffering.*

*When, surrounded by sun, I reached the hill again*

*winter had come.*

*And the tree in my path had a scar.*

*All I could do was walk past*

*and wonder how many twigs the tree could give.*

*I put mine in a box that night,*

*buried and forgot it.*

*One thinks little of trees in winter:*

*one questions their stark being.*

*In spring I thought of the tree,  
which had turned green before the others.  
Though even then a boxed twig was not recalled.  
I only watched the green tree  
as I walked by the hill.*

*One day, in passing, I pulled a leaf from its branch.  
I remembered, then, the twig.*

*From the box I unearthed it.  
I looked long at it, so as not to forget.  
I held it, so as to be sure.*

*Summer had come then,  
and I saw the tree splendid against the sky.  
I wanted all of that tree:  
each twig, each leaf, each branch—  
to become mine alone,  
to be possessed by no one else.*

*But this belonging would not be.  
For all the hours I would watch,  
the tree was no more mine.  
For all the days I would stand near,  
the tree came no closer.*

*And I looked at the twig's scar  
and the wound on the tree, and  
I felt ashamed.*

*I tried that night to throw the twig away  
but I could not. I looked at it  
for a long time  
till its scars ached in me,  
till I could hold it in my hands  
and be content.*

*Still I wanted the tree.  
But this was a quiet desire.*

## II

*Last night I revisited the hill,  
and the tree reminded me of the twig which  
somewhere I have kept.  
I have not seen it for a long time, nor  
held it in my hands—  
and the quiet desire for the whole tree  
is a kind of wound too.*

*When I left the hill  
I remembered how I boxed the twig in  
forgetfulness and pain.  
In a way I wanted to do that again.*

*Something about the scar, and the  
splendor of the whole tree against the sky  
stopped me  
saying:  
the twig grows within you.*



Casiena Fones

14 The LOFT



## SMOKING IS NOT WORTH THE GAMBLE

Despite publicity on the hazards of smoking, cigarette sales are on the increase. This could mean that either flirting with death is an exciting gamble, or that inwardly each smoker hopes that he individually will not succumb to the deadly effects of tobacco. Many, or all smokers are aware that cigarettes can cause lung cancer: the ratio is 1 in 8 smokers, compared to 1 in 300 non-smokers.<sup>1</sup> We are all aware that smoking is harmful to the respiratory system, to the heart, arteries, and to the nervous system. Also, that nicotine, a drug contained in tobacco, is one of the most lethal poisons known to man. Since smokers seem unconcerned that tobacco can kill, let us look at the psychological aspect and try to find out why a person smokes; then perhaps it will become easier to stop.

If there were not strong psychological reasons for smoking, the unpleasant taste and effects of the first cigarette would cause it to be thrown away. The young school boys who smoke are rebelling against their status as juveniles. The cigarette is a symbol of the mysterious adult world from which they are excluded. The appeal of tobacco, the secret of its hold is that it takes advantage of the human need for companionship. As when we are in trouble or under stress, we need someone or something to lean on. Smok-

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<sup>1</sup>E. Cuyler Hammond, "The Effects of Smoking," *Scientific American* (July 1962), P. 45.

ing may be only a disguise for our inhibitions which psychologists trace from birth.

The first anxiety we experience in infancy is separation from our mother. When we are frightened we cried for her soothing caress. Having been part of her body, in the womb, we unconsciously long to be reunited and at peace again. The child at the breast gets near to restoring the original oneness. His most intense pleasure is to receive his mother's milk; therefore, the sensation is concentrated in his mouth. Psychoanalysts call this period the oral phase, and it is quite logical according to Freud's theory<sup>2</sup> that these very early reactions make a permanent impression on the mind. All memory of breast feeding is gone quite soon, but as the child grows, he may suck his thumb, chew candy, pencils and toys — this is a continuation of the simple delights of the oral phase. Whether we wish it or not, we carry our childhood with us to our dying day. The child feels more secure when the nipple or some substitute is placed in his mouth. As he grows up, if the craving persists, it is satisfied by a cigar, pipe or cigarette.<sup>3</sup>

A story is told of the Shah of Persia in the early nineteenth century who played a trick on some of his guests. The Shah hated smoking and secretly filled the communal pipe with horse dung instead of tobacco. When he asked his guests how they enjoyed a new brand of tobacco that he had discovered, they declared that it was exquisite. One guest said that it had the flavor of a thousand flowers.<sup>4</sup> Actually the Shah may have been doing his guests a great favor by substituting a product that did not contain the harmful components that are in tobacco.

Even if the deadly ingredients in tobacco were removed, such as nicotine, carbon monoxide, benzpyrene — (the most powerful cancer-producing agent tested in animals), plus arsenic amonia and radioactive potassium, the habit itself can become very disagreeable. It burns holes in clothes, rugs and furniture. It costs \$125.00 per year for a one pack a day smoker.<sup>5</sup> Think of what the

<sup>2</sup>Leslie M. LeCron, *How to Stop Smoking Through Self-Hypnosis*, (Hollywood California: 1966), P. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Clifford D. Morgan, *Introduction to Psychology*, (McGraw-Hill: 1966), P. 491.

<sup>4</sup>Harold Shryock, *Mind if I Smoke?*, (Mountain View, Calif.: 1959) P. 38.

<sup>5</sup>Vended cigarettes cost 40¢ per pack, or 28.9¢ per pack by the carton; averaging 34.45¢ per pack times 365 days equals \$125.74 a year.

cost would be for a two or three pack a day smoker with a wife who smokes also. Smoking produces a foul odor and dirty ash trays. It does more than make a mere nuisance in the home, it can kill!

While living in Tennessee during the spring of 1964 I visited a patient who was suffering from lung cancer. He was very pale and very thin. I could see that it was difficult for him to breath, in fact, most of the time he could breath only with the aid of oxygen. He experienced great pain which was momentarily numbed by sedatives and pain-killers. This man had a twin brother who was hale and hearty, one who never smoked. The patient was a smoker. As he lay there, he turned his face to look out the hospital window. The grass was green, the leaves were bursting their buds; outside life was beginning anew. But here, death stalked silently in the room. Suddenly, I pictured myself in his place. What was he thinking? If someone would have told him years ago that smoking would cause this, would he have quit? What would you do? He died a week later, perhaps twenty years before his natural time. With an example such as this, shouldn't you experiment with quitting for your health's sake?

If you feel that smoking is getting out of hand, and you have become a slave to it, prove that you have backbone and quit! If it frightens you to think of losing your friend — the cigarette — forever, quit for thirty days to prove it can be done. At the end of this time you will feel better, breath better, taste your food better, and sleep better, and chances are, you won't care to smoke any longer. Quit gambling, and add extra years to your life.



Anne Benson

## FROM A GATE

*Anonymous*

*Seven Ancient Chinese*

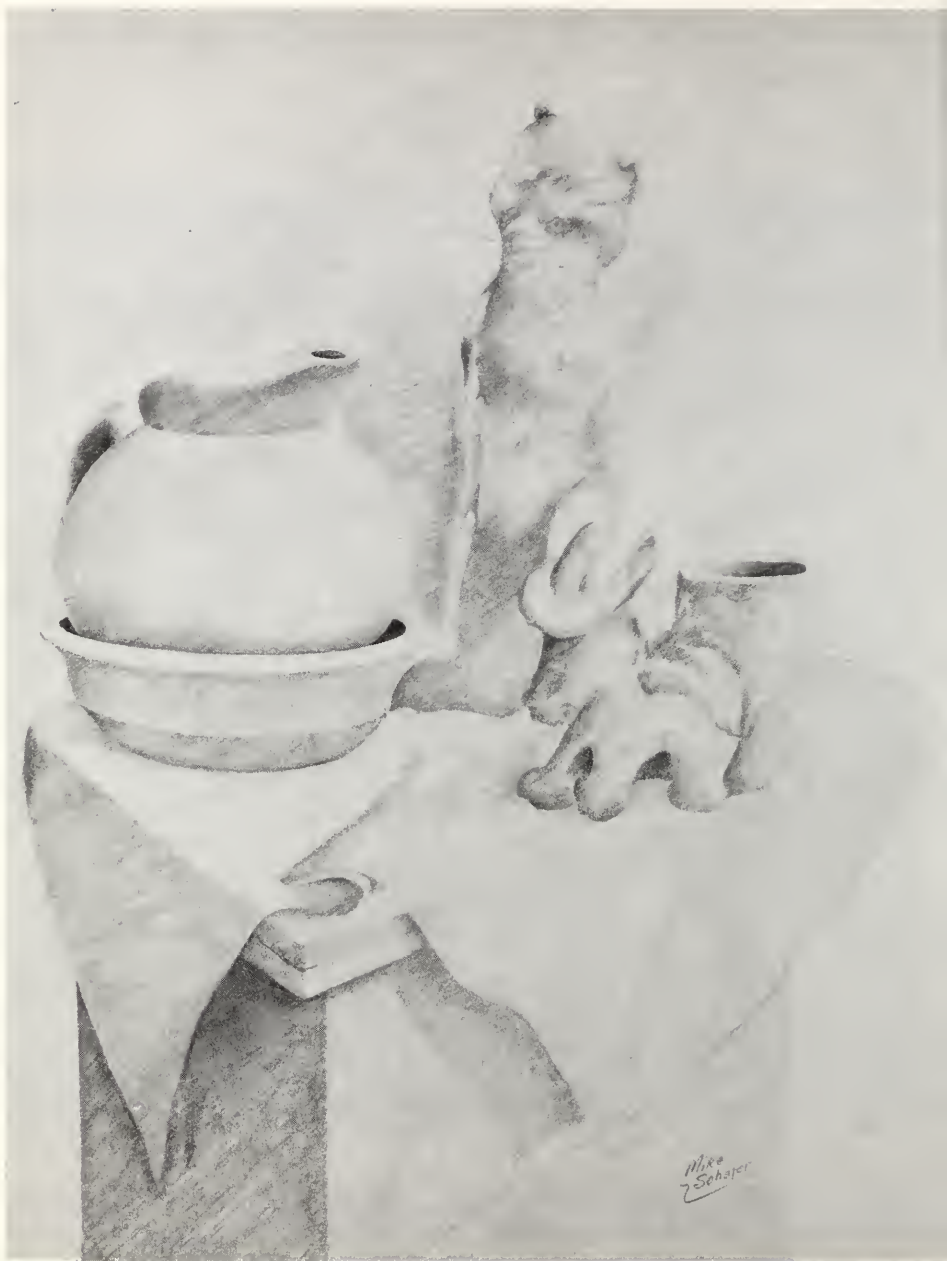
*watched me from a gate*  
the moon is full and they are as old.

*Moonrays*

*captured seven nodding to their fall—*  
*the night*  
*attended seven beneath its pall.*

*Three women with no cleavages,*  
*four men with no blood*  
*chanted from behind a gate—*  
is this a coward's world?





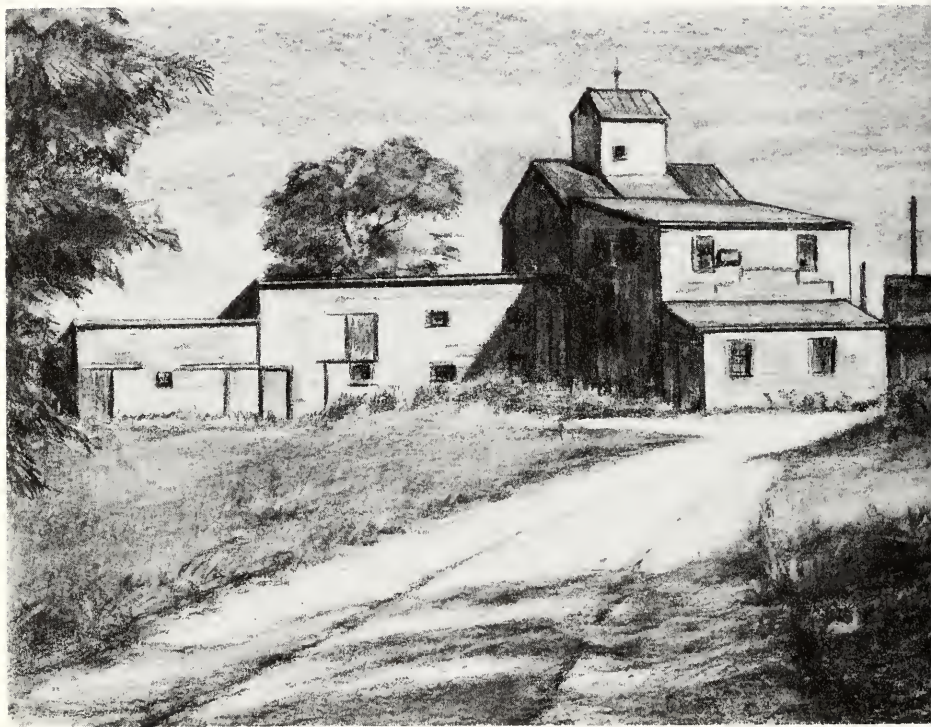
Mike Schafer

# NOW THAT WE DO

*John Wing*

*now  
that we do  
have  
what we want  
we can  
retire  
to the  
silent  
country side  
forevermore  
and free  
the pigeons  
from  
our  
mind cages  
but  
i suppose  
they will  
always return  
with  
messages from  
the  
outside world  
but we won't  
have to  
answer  
unless of course  
we are  
contacted directly  
and it's  
only a brief  
statement we must make  
otherwise  
we just keep  
inside our lasting  
dream  
until we step  
from it  
for  
ever  
more*





Casiena Fones

## THE CLOTHESLINE

I am always fascinated by other people's abilities to recall events in their lives which occurred when they were one or two years old. Some people speak of a father's return from the War, the grand party held for him, and some small incidents which happened to each of the guests. "Great Aunt Mary fell off a chair," or "Uncle Fred had to leave early to attend a church social." At one year old these feats of memory are truly accomplishments which should make headlines in tomorrow's newspaper.

I would imagine my pre-school years were spent much like those of most youngsters. The exception is that my memory does not allow me to recall many of the various games I played, how I played them, or who played with me. It wasn't until I was four or five that I had an experience which I can recount with certainty.

I was lying in my back yard on the slightly burnt-brown grass of late summer with my eyes lightly closed. It was the middle of the afternoon, and the sun was just beginning its fall to the cliffs of the Mississippi River a few miles away. I was facing the sun and marveling over the discovery of thousands of multi-colored bubbles of light displayed in front of my eyes. I began to cry at the beauty of the bubbles, and the tears produced a kaleidoscopic display of ever-changing patterns. A dark shadow passed before me, and startled, I opened my eyes to see my mother going about her task of hanging baskets upon baskets of newly washed clothes on the flimsy, over-used clothesline. The single strand of wire was attached to the roof of the dilapidated chicken house on my right.

The faded red structure leaned in the direction of the wire, arrested from falling by the combined weight of corn cobs and water pans left over from last winter's feeding. The burnished wire ran the length of the yard from the chicken house to the ramshackle "out-house" where it passed through a small pulley and darted at right angles to a lone, gigantic maple tree at the corner of our house. The "outhouse" tipped precariously as the weight of dripping sheets and towels hung heavily on the line and waved slowly to the wind like an old and tired man rambling through a park. (My mother prided herself on her uncanny ability to judge precisely just how many articles of clothing could be hung on the line without producing a catastrophe . . .)

As the shadow passed, the bright yellow lights and blood-red planets came again into view. I could feel myself being pulled through the heavens at a rate approaching the speed of light. Solar systems and galaxies were left behind. Large clusters of stars seemed far away. In the distance a misty shape could be seen, and, with a sudden burst of speed, I flew toward it. Clearly visible now, the burning yellow dust particles surrounded the bleak emptiness of the center. It was through this immense center I was being drawn, and I had great fear of crashing into some hidden barrier in the center. Suddenly, I was through, and the brilliance of the light was replaced by the icy darkness of space. For a moment, I felt entirely alone. Then another misty shape appeared, and, just as suddenly, I was being drawn through it, traveling toward the next one. It was at this time that I formulated the word "nebula" to describe these strange, flowing, half-light, half-dusty, doughnut shaped clouds I was passing through beyond the planets on my grand journey to "somewhere."

Years later, while reading scientific accounts and descriptions of space and seeing their use of the word "Nebula," I found myself stonily unimpressed. The grand hypotheses were stated as possibilities. I *knew* them to be true for I had seen it all many years before.

But it was summer now. A strategically placed sheet on the clothesline blotted the sun from my view. I felt my self being drawn back through space and time until finally my reverie was

broken. I opened my eyes and turned my head to the sight of chickens scratching in the dust and ants and beetles scurrying for shelter. The world seemed utterly strange and alien to me. But the sun was still warm and soothing on my back, and I did not desire comfort from the familiar voices floating on the air. I recognized them as belonging to my two sisters who I knew would be playing on the front porch. There every day, they would set up small tables and chairs and play house. Cats were used in place of dolls. They would be dressed in doll clothes and paraded in front of imaginary neighbors. No, today I didn't need their company. They wouldn't listen to me anyway. My wondrous journey would pass by them unheard. I got up from the grass, swung on the clothesline for a while, and went into the house.

That night I stayed awake for a long time listening and watching for the approach of some alien space ship coming to rescue me and return me to a place where I belonged. When I dreamed, I dreamed of bubbles and lights sliding gently down a clothesline, releasing all the clothes and letting them fall down and down, far enough so they could never stop me again.





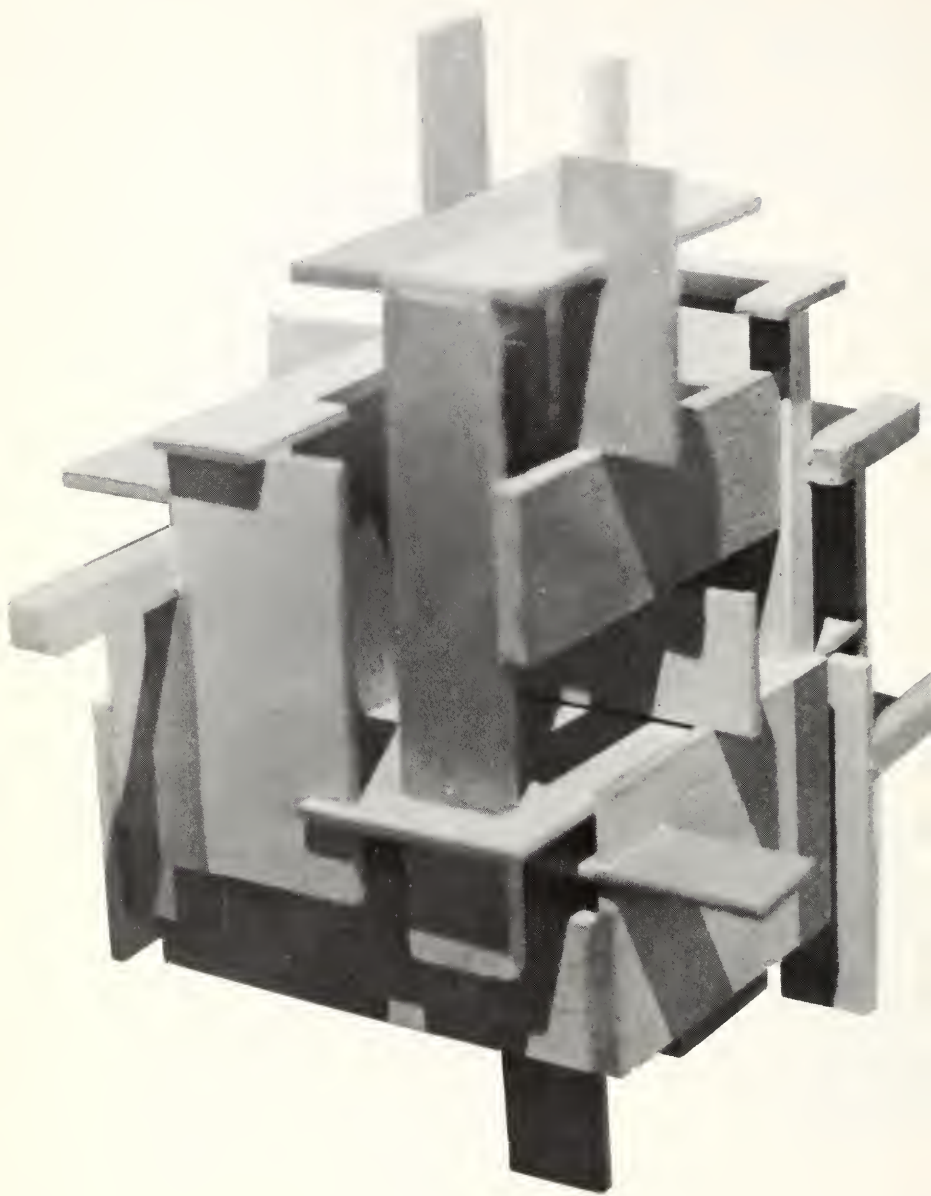
Anne Langsholt

# HE WAS RIGHT<sup>1</sup>

*Charles A. Voseles*

*You thought  
He  
Was wrong,  
But  
You proved  
He  
Was right  
By  
Your act  
In  
The night  
Destroying  
The man  
But  
Not his  
Ideals  
That endure  
On  
Into the—  
After  
The man  
Steps  
Into the void.*

<sup>1</sup>Martin Luther King



Steve Johanson  
*Photo by Peter Herdklotz*



## ETC.

*Anonymous*

*Pure nonsense,  
it sells,  
like a gold metal  
prize winning  
beer can design.*

*And  
the creator of pop songs  
is Albert's  
seeing eye dog,  
Claude.*

## MARRIAGE

*Anonymous*

*When spokes are bent,  
when twisted or as rubber,  
the rim, the wheel, will roll  
with shakes . . .  
if it rolls at all.*



Mike Schafer

## THE STATION MASTER

The cottage glowed a warm red as the sun set on the blackened hills in the distance. The old man had long since stopped noticing those hills where a fire had raged unchecked, lighting the sky at night and blackening the western sky with smoke during the day, about this same time the summer a year ago. The cottage, as the rest of the station, was streaked with soot, but it harmed nothing — the paint had worn off the buildings years before. Vassily Peronsky, the station master, as the peasants still called the old man, had just finished feeding his old mare and was taking an armload of wood inside for the night's cooking fire.

As Peronsky neared the door to the cottage, his eye was caught by someone coming down the tracks in the faint light of evening. He entered the cottage, placed the wood in the basket by the fireplace, and went out of the cottage to await the visitor. As he watched the man coming closer, he decided to ask him to eat with him and spend the night. He did not decide to ask the visitor to stay the night so much because it was the Russian tradition, but because he had not had a real conversation with anyone in months.

The visitor was a young man about the same age as Peronsky when he was first assigned to the station. Vassily thought of how promising this position had been for promotion. The business of the station increased tremendously at first, and in his second year at the station he was able to hire an assistant. There were some times as many as three trains a day, but now there were as few as two trains a week. It seemed that Vassily was always too busy or family problems prevented him from asking for a promotion.

Then when the new watch-level route, which was faster and smoother riding, was laid to Moscow, his station's use decreased greatly. As the years went on and his position grew worse and worse, there always seemed to be something preventing Peronsky from doing that which he was going to do — better his job and position. The sight of the young man, so much like himself when he first came to the station, renewed his lifelong dream of a better life. Peronsky was now old and grey, slightly stooped-shouldered, and still friendly and talkative.

"You looked tired — would you care to spend the night?" Peronsky inquired of the young man.

"I was hoping you would ask," said the young man. "I am Nicholas Ivanitch. But I must give you something for your trouble, and I have no money."

"Think nothing of it now — a little help with the morning chores will be all that is needed. Come, please go inside," said Peronsky.

Peronsky went about the business of preparing supper saying little — he was saving the conversation till later. When supper was ready they both greedily ate the food Peronsky had prepared. They talked of how good this simple food was, the fine weather and how the Lord had blessed the peasants of the region. And finally the talk turned to their own lives.

"I was about your age when I first came here to this station. I came with Vera, my wife, and our young son," the old man fondly remembered. "My father was a peasant on the estate of a rich Count Ahrosimov. The count believed in freemasonry and had the peasants' children educated so that some day all the peasants on his estate might be liberated. I was clever and learned quickly, and I got a job sending and receiving the wire code while the station master was at supper. That station master took a liking to me, and when I was twenty-two, he got me this job as the station master here at Smolensk. I was lucky, very lucky."

"Yes, you were very lucky," answered Nicholas. "If I should be so lucky when I reach Moscow . . . I was the apprentice to a carriage maker back in Kiev, but life was dull, the wages low, and I

know I can make a go of it in Moscow. And if I should be so lucky, I will open my own carriage shop sooner than I have ever dreamed."

"I also have a dream like yours, and it will come to be as soon as I get a little bit ahead," said Peronsky.

"You're an old man now, Peronsky; you have never made it and never will — it is too late. You make yourself a fool to believe that you will ever change your life for the better," answered Nicholas. "But you watch and shortly I will be a rich carriage maker in Moscow. I will succeed!"

They both sat quietly and watched the dying embers of the fire, and neither broke the silence for a few moments.

"I came here in hopes of proving myself," said Peronsky, "so I could get a better job some day. After a few years here I was going to ask for a better position, but we were in debt for this cottage, and Vera thought it best to stay here until Peter, our son, was older and our circumstances better. And when Peter was older, he ran off at seventeen to join the hussars and was shortly killed in a small battle with the Turks. I couldn't bring myself to move Vera from our cottage right after Peter's death — at least not for a few years. Then, when I was again ready to apply for a better position, Vera caught a fever and died. After Vera's death I couldn't bring myself to even think of leaving our cottage, but in a few years my dream was back again fresh and clear. Finally I sent a message to the authorities saying I was seeking a higher position, but I did not receive an answer. And I have let the matter lie there these last few years."

"I advise you let the matter be," said Nicholas. "You will only destroy your dream when you are turned down — you are too old and who would they get to come here and replace you?"

The talk ended here for this night — they both were very tired. When they had made up their beds, they quickly dropped off to sleep.

As agreed, Nicholas stayed the next day and helped Peronsky with his work. He was still there the next night and he asked Peronsky if he might stay on for a while and work for a small

wage so he would have some money when he reached Moscow. Peronsky said yes because Nicholas was a good worker and he liked his company.

The weeks Nicholas stayed on at the station stretched into months and he learned all of Peronsky's duties. He even learned to send and receive on the telegraph so he could take any messages that came while Peronsky made his daily trip to the peasants' huts to buy food.

Peronsky liked Nicholas; he liked how well he worked and how quickly he learned the work at the station. Peronsky also enjoyed the conversations they had after supper each night. Until now, Vassily really had not had anyone to talk to since his wife had died. So it was one day that Peronsky, as he did almost every day, set out to buy food from the peasants feeling confident the station was in good hands with Nicholas there.

Peronsky rode the old mare over to where the peasants lived. He finished his business, but before he could start back a cold fall rain storm broke, and Peronsky was drenched. He urged the horse on, but when he was still a mile from the cottage the horse came up lame, and he had to dismount and lead the horse home. By the time he reached the cottage he was chilled and late that night a fever set in. Nicholas did all he could to make him comfortable. When Peronsky fell into a restless sleep, Nicholas went to bed. And the old station master died silently in the night.

Early the next morning Nicholas found that Peronsky had died; he looked like he was asleep — peaceful and rested. Nicholas did not grieve. The old man had lived a long life and if he had lived, he would have gone on living in the monotony of life at the station until old age finished him. He served little purpose to society — there was little reason for his living.

Nicholas constructed a wooden box out of old packing crates. He lined it with the old afghan Peronsky's wife had crocheted which had covered Peronsky's bed. He laid Vassily Peronsky in the box and folded the afghan over his body leaving his face exposed. He thought how peaceful Peronsky looked as he nailed on the top of the wooden box.

He stood over the makeshift coffin lying tilted to one side in the shallow hole he had dug next to the grave of Peronsky's wife. He stood there; feeling, sensing, thinking, remembering nothing. He was brought back to reality by the dull thud of a lump of wet clay falling on the wooden box from the side of the grave. He then began to fill the hole with shovelful of dirt.

"Here lies a man that was 'going to.' Now he is gone," Nicholas muttered as he quickly filled the hole.

Nicholas sent a telegraph message to Moscow to inform the authorities that Peronsky had died. He told them that he would stay on and carry out Peronsky's duties at the station until the time they found a replacement. He asked for Peronsky's salary plus fifty rubles more a month. The authorities approved his offer and he stayed on doing Peronsky's work.

About a month later Nicholas wired Moscow concerning the replacement. They said soon enough they would find someone — they were still looking for the right man. Nicholas wired many times more in the months to come, but always the answer was the same. He finally gave up sending that same old message and slowly settled into the dull monotony of life at the station. And he stayed on at the station carrying out Peronsky's duties until old age finished him.





Casiena Fones

## THE PILLARED HOUSE

*Zara*

*Life no longer suckles Mother Earth.  
The withered vines droop with wormy fruit.  
Water is a fingerprint of mud,  
Oozing through gullies of salted land.  
Skeletons of God's creatures  
Breath skin-searing dust.  
Their eyes are empty sockets  
Searching for nonexistent light.  
The white picket fence encircles  
A plot of thistles and weeds.  
The pillared house was gutted  
By a fire of embittered neglect,  
And Hope, that essence of yesterday,  
Has fled this desolate place.*



Diane Zuck

## TO REAP A THOUSAND MEMORIES

The piercing noise heightened and the spinning motion of the whirlpool of bricks, glass, and wood grew more rapid as it zeroed in on its defenseless target below . . .

The huddle of warm covers was thrown off furiously as the figure in the bed shot up suddenly from its prostrate position.

Shaking and perspiring from the nightmarish dream, Jennifer reached over and turned on the light. Adjusting her eyes to the light, she focused on the clock by the lamp. It was five-thirty. In another half-hour her mother would be awake. After rearranging the covers, she turned off the light and lay rigidly still in the bed. She knew her mother couldn't be easily deceived, so she would have to perfect her plan. The thought of the letter kept recurring as she lay in the darkened silence of the room.

As the alarm sounded in her parent's bedroom, Jennifer went through her mother's routine in her mind. It was like some sort of ritual or unbroken tradition that she followed upon arising. First she would go into the bathroom to freshen up and then into the kitchen to fix the coffee. She would wake up Jennifer's step-father next, and while he was washing, her mother would cook breakfast.

"Jennifer, wake up! It's six-thirty."

Jennifer lay groaning in between the covers, waiting for the bedroom door to open.

"Jennifer, how many times do I have to call you to get up? You had better go to bed earlier if you aren't going to be able to get going the next day."

"I don't feel well, Mom. I don't think I'll go to school today."

Her mother suspiciously eyed the open books which lay on the desk. "I suppose you didn't finish your homework and you're afraid to go to school. You know that your grades have declined ever since we moved here. What's the matter, don't you like the new school?"

"Oh Mother, do we have to go into that business again? I'm just not feeling well. That's all."

"Well, it seems to me that you haven't been feeling well a lot in the six months that we have been living here. You've got to snap out of it. Don't you realize how much nicer we have it here in St. Paul in this beautiful, new house? You should be thankful for the change. Anyway, be sure to take some aspirin and stay in bed. I'll call the school before I leave for work."

Jennifer breathed a little easier after her mother had closed the door. She lay back down and listened to the sounds in the house and waited.

Later, when the house was silent again, Jennifer got out of bed and dressed quickly. She left the bed unmade and her pajamas under the covers.

In the kitchen, the letter lay on the counter like a mirror on a wall; she was compelled to look into it, but she wasn't satisfied with what she saw. She read it over once more and stuffed it back into the envelope. It was so good and yet so bad to hear from their former neighbors in Maple Plains. She gathered up her coat and keys and shut the door on the silent house.

The sight of her car gave her spirit an odd lift. It was a real heap of junk, but it ran, and it was her own. Her parents had given it to her after they had moved to St. Paul. Because it was a big city, she had a greater distance to travel to school. As she turned the key in the ignition she said a quick prayer that the "Junk" would make the hour drive to Maple Plains.

It was a strange sort of day, weatherwise. The sun would appear and then disappear briefly, as if it couldn't make up its mind. It was overcast now, and a slight shower of rain was falling.



Jennifer's hands tightened on the wheel as she thought of the letter. So they were going to tear the house down where she had spent all her childhood. Of all things they were going to make a gas station out of it. Good old Maple Plains, always thinking of progress! She wondered how it would compete with the two gas stations across the street from it.

The sun hadn't reappeared as she turned off the freeway into Maple Plains. Everything seemed like a miniature replica of a city. Nothing had changed except for the building of a new gas station here and there. It was so quiet, no hustle and bustle of big city sounds. As Jennifer drove down Main Street she saw the Thompson family's dog. She honked and the dog darted away barking.

She had finally come back to the house. She parked the car in the alley and ran wildly up the back steps. She pushed her hand through the hole in the screen and unlatched the door.

Inside, the house was awesomely dark and empty. It smelled of a musty odor, and a thick layer of dust and dirt covered everything. As Jennifer walked slowly through the house, she tried to remember things as they were long ago. The laughter and the tears that had filled every crack. She passed into the living room and stood transfixed. She pictured the rocking chair in the corner of the room in which her father always sat; when Jennifer was little he used to rock her back and forth on his lap. Her mother would tease sometimes and would say, "That rocking chair is going to be the death of you yet, honey." Then suddenly one night he had had a heart seizure and collapsed into the rocking chair. After the funeral her mother had it burned.

Jennifer ascended the stairs and entered the bedroom that had been hers. She hesitated for a moment and then opened the closet door. There on the wall of the closet was the farewell message she had written on it before the movers arrived: "I loved this old house dearly and I hope whoever lives here after me may share the happiness of life that it provided. Keep this old house glowing and you will reap a thousand memories.

Jennifer pondered awhile and realized how foolish it was to try to cling to these old memories. A new life was being formed and

she was now aware that she must shape her life to fit this change. Quickly descending the stairs, she ran out the back door and hopped in the car. As she drove at a good speed through Maple Plains she noticed that the sun had finally appeared. It was a strangely beautiful sun. She held her head up towards it and smiled.

## INTOXICATED

*Charles A. Voseles*

*Intoxicated*

*In the moon's light,*

*I went into heaven*

*With one thought in sight*

*To chase heaven's angels*

*Throughout the night*

*With delight.*



## GENESIS

*Paul L. Carlson*

*Today the sun did not rise,  
It surprised the world with darkness.  
The clouds are still there,  
The clock still ticks on  
Telling everyone that doom is near.  
The earth is not warm,  
The soil still holds life  
But does not yield its fruits.  
Science runs through the streets  
Asking all present, why?*

*Only the blind see what has always been  
Surrounding their shifting lives.  
God laughs at the world in its confusion,  
Children ask their parents,  
What is sky blue?  
As it grows colder  
Life dies away in the eternal night.  
The generators have stopped,  
The gears and pendulums stand in their stillness.  
Man has gone to his last home.  
  
Then there was light.  
Genesis.*

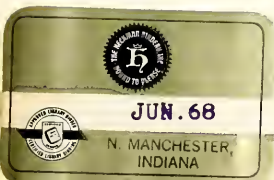












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